

SONG OF
THE PALM

TRACY ROBINSON

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.







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SONG OF THE PALM

AND OTHER POEMS,

MOSTLY TROPICAL.

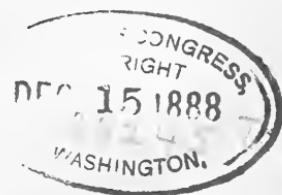
TO WHICH IS ADDED

AN ORATION, DELIVERED AT THE UNITED STATES
CONSULATE, ASPINWALL, ON THE
FOURTH OF JULY,

1866.

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BY
TRACY ROBINSON.
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BRENTANOS:

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By TRACY ROBINSON.

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My feet love well to haunt the meads,
And wander where the thrush is loud ;
And yet some sad enchantment leads
Me aye among the busy crowd ;
And with bent head my life proceeds
Where the smoke hovers like a cloud.

From "Shadow-Soul," by John Payne.

Sumptuous is the South—a Syren singing us ever forward to a bliss never reached ; but with each mile won, she makes the pursuit more passionate, brimming the cup that only feeds the thirst with delicious draughts that taste divine.

From "Nile Notes," by George William Curtis.

*Sometimes I pause before an open gate,
The Gate of Dreams;
And wonder if, by any happy fate,
The lucent gleams
Of all the glad and golden world within,
My gaze that meet,
Are presages that I may some day win
That fair retreat.*

SONG OF THE PALM.

“The trees are imperfect men, and seem to bemoan their imprisonment, rooted in the ground.”—EMERSON.

I.

Wild is its nature, as it were a token,
Born of the sunshine, and the stars, and sea ;
Grand as a passion, felt, but never spoken,
Lonely and proud and free.

For when the Maker set its crown of beauty,
And for its home ordained the torrid ring,
Assigning unto each its place and duty,
He made the Palm a King.

So when in reverie I look and listen,
Half dream-like floats within my passive mind,
Why in the sun its branches gleam and glisten,
And harp-wise beat the wind ;

SONG OF THE PALM.

Why, when the sea-waves, heralding their tidings,
 Come roaring on the shore with crests of down,
In grave acceptance of their sad confidings,
 It bows its stately crown ;

Why, in the death-like calms of night and morn-
 ing,
Its quivering spears of green are never still,
But ever tremble, as, at solemn warning,
 A human heart may thrill ;

And also why it stands in lonely places,
 By the red desert or the sad sea shore,
Or haunts the jungle, or the mountain graces
 Where eagles proudly soar !

It is a sense of kingly isolation,
 Of royal beauty and enchanting grace,
Proclaiming from the earliest creation
 The power and pride of race,

SONG OF THE PALM.

That has almost imbued it with a spirit,
And made it sentient, although still a tree,
With dim perception that it might inherit
An immortality.

The lines of kinship thus so near converging,
It is not strange, O heart of mine, that I,
While stars were shining and old ocean surging,
Should intercept a sigh.

It fell a-sighing when the faint wind, dying,
Had kissed the tropic night a fond adieu—
The starry cross on her warm bosom lying,
Within the southern view.

And when the crescent moon, the west descending,
Drew o'er her face the curtain of the sea,
In the rapt silence, eager senses lending,
Low came the sigh to me.

SONG OF THE PALM.

God of my life ! how can I ever render
The full sweet meaning sadly thus conveyed ;
The full sad meaning, heart-breakingly tender,
That through the cadence strayed ?

O that the Priestess, who, with magic lyre,
Sang last the South, ere death gave her to fame,
Had heard, and fanned her fierce poetic fire
Into “baptismal flame” !

That he who by the far Egyptian river,
Howadji worshipful from Western shores,
Caught the grand inspiration that forever
The sunlight round it pours,

Again had listened, and again revealing
The intertropic summer of the soul,
Had made translation, eloquent with feeling
Beyond my poor control !

SONG OF THE PALM.

II.

When the wild North-wind by the sun enchanted,
Seeks the fair South, as lover beauty's shrine,
It bears the moaning of the sorrow-haunted,
Gloomy, storm-beaten Pine.

The waves of ocean catch the miserere,
Far wafted seaward from the wintry main,
They roll it on o'er reaches vast and dreary
With infinite refrain,

Until on coral shores, where endless Summer
Waves golden banners round her queenly
throne,
The Palm enfolds the weary spirit roamer
With low responsive moan.

SONG OF THE PALM.

The sea-grape hears it, and the lush banana,
 In the sweet indolence of their repose ;
The frangipanni, like a crowned Sultana,
 The passion-flower, and rose ;

And the fierce tiger in his darksome lair,
 Deep hid away beneath the bamboo-tree ;
All the wild habitants of earth and air,
 And of the sleeping sea.

It throws a spell of silence so entralling,
 So breathless and intense and mystical,
Not the deep hush of skies when stars are falling
 Can fill the soul so full.

A death in life ! A calm so deep and brooding
 It floods the heart with an ecstatic pain ;
Brimming with joy, yet fearfully foreboding
 The dreadful hurricane.

SONG OF THE PALM.

Fail love, fly happiness, yield all things mortal !

Fate, with the living, hath my small lot cast
To dwell beside thee, Palm ! Beyond death's
portal,

Guard well my sleep at last.

For I do love thee with a lover's passion.

Morn, noon, and night thou art forever grand—
Type of a glory God alone may fashion
Within the Summer Land.

Sigh not, O Palm ! Dread not the final hour.

For oft I've seen within thy gracious shade,
Amid rose-garlands fair from Love's own bower,
Lithe, dusky forms displayed,

Clad with the magic of their beauty only ;

And it were strange if Paradise should be
Despoiled and made forever sad and lonely,
Bereft of these and thee !

AMONG THE DREDGES.

TO H. B. S.

Down where the baby Andes
Lie a-dream under tropic skies,
And the turbulent river Chagres
Rushes forward torrent-wise
Through the equatorial jungle,
On its way to the parent sea,
I have seen those marvellous dredges,
Like huge engines of destiny.

It is wonderful to watch them,
As they swing at their work all day,
Like antediluvian monsters,
Devouring the earth in their way.
Nor yet do they pause for the darkness,
But as well through the hours of night,
They never tire nor falter
Till the dawn of the morning light.

AMONG THE DREDGES.

They are toiling for civilization !

And the world will one day know

How great is the debt it owes them,

When the tides of the oceans flow
Back and forth, from each to the other !

And then, as with one acclaim,
My friend, you will stand acknowledged,
And will wear the laurel of fame !

IN ABSENCE.

Though spices lure me and the rose-tree throws
 Her heart of fragrance to beguile the sense,
Though warm airs woo me and the beauty grows
 Intense,

Though sunsets ravish with their blue and gold,
 And amber moons enchant the tropic zone,
Love grows a-weary and my heart a-cold,
 Alone !

Then come, my darling, come again to me,
 Nor linger longer on the far-off shore ;
Between us there shall roll the cruel sea
 No more.

I long to clasp you in a fond embrace,
 And tell you, tell you, with my every breath,
I ne'er again will miss your loving face
 Till death !

PLANTING OF THE PALM.

The sea was breaking on its reef of coral
With its unceasing roar,
While darker than the hue of pine or laurel
Beyond it lay the shore—

The tropic shore. And there, one happy hour,
In the brief sunset calm,
Just in the shadow of a fragrant bower,
We planted our first palm,

My love and I. And as we sat beside it
We said it might so be,
The time might come, unless we were denied it,
When we would have our tree.

We told it then a loving little story,
As if it might take heed ;
Then turned away to read the sunset glory
That was in part our creed.

PLANTING OF THE PALM.

Alas, the years have flown ; each has departed
More swiftly than the last,
And now alone all sad and heavy-hearted
I'm dreaming of the past.

Its branches wave ; but she, my love so tender,
For whom all things make moan,
No longer bides with me. O, could I send her
Translation of the tone

In which our palm tree is forever sighing,
Perhaps it would allay
The grief of which her heart is almost dying,
To be so far away.

Harper's Magazine, 1874.

A TROPIC SUNSET.

Vanished the vision ! Shadows of darkness
Compass the heavens, swift as disaster
Follows the onset of a grand army
 Valiant of heroes.

Who shall describe it ? There, o'er the ocean,
Just where the headland creeps from the moun-
tain,
Thirsty with summer, down to the water,
 Daylight departed.

From the black tempest there at the northward,
Where the horizon blends with the desert
Of the eternal wild surging billows,
 Flashed the red lightning.

A TROPIC SUNSET.

East, where the shadows o'er fair Santa Rita
Gather and hover, ghostly white vapors,
Creeping all softly up from the valleys,
Lay down to slumber.

All o'er the heavens spread a wide glory,
Greater than Jacob saw in his vision,
Grander by far than ever imagined
Milton or Dante.

The shore seemed enchanted, the sea turned to
amber,
With pontoons of crystal thrown from cloud-
castles,
Proudly erected there on the mountains
Of the true Gold Coast.

Vessels seemed sailing up from the sunset,
Laden with treasure ; sailing all fairly,
While o'er their courses waved without number
Banners of crimson.

A TROPIC SUNSET.

Islands of beauty, seemingly real,
Filled all the west with a peace so enchanting,
The heart, being human, longed without measure
 Its joys to inherit ;

Eagerly longed that the shades of life's evening,
Folding their wings over all that can perish,
Might gather the loved on a shore so celestial
 In the Hereafter.

God knows forever the thoughts of His creatures;
Knows their true value. Therefore before Him
It were but vain that a pretence were offered
 For true devotion.

Will He then listen, will He believe us,
When we, all thankful, reading His Gospel,
Lay on His altar all that He gave us?
 Love is immortal.

MY PRAYER.

O Love,
Sing me thy song—
Blind singer sweet upon my threshold here.
Stay, and thy carol lovingly prolong,
 Nor ever fear ;
And while thou singest, in a waking dream
 Of happy fantasies will I explore
The sunny plenitude of wood and stream,
 Of cloud and mountain and the murmuring
 shore,
 To bring for thee what cheer,
 O Love !

MY PRAYER.

O Life,
Thy meaning teach.
Unfold for me thy hidden, fateful lore,
That howso toiling thy grand heights to reach,
Not any more
My weary travail shall be all in vain ;
That sun or tempest shall alike reveal
Forever lessening loss and greater gain.
Keep, keep my heart as true as finest steel
To reap thy richest store,
O Life !

MY PRAYER.

O Death,
In sombre state,
The torch invert not until latest day ;
Nor heap the dull red mound. I pray thee wait,
With kind delay,
Till the long loving summer-time is gone,
And happy autumn hoards her sun-wrought
gold ;
Till the wild frost-winds, frowning down the
dawn,
Chill noon and sunset with their bitter cold,
And bid no longer stay,
O Death !

MY PRAYER.

O Faith,
Lo, here am I !
Bear me aloft upon triumphant wings !
Although deep laden with the sad alloy
Of sinful things,
Close in the folds of thy protecting care,
Nor doubt nor darkness shall assail me more ;
But sunlit visions, rapturously fair,
Shall gild my longings for the glorious shore
Whence flow thy crystal springs,
O Faith !

*JUNE MEMORIES FROM THE
TROPICS.*

Within the cool dark shade of tropic trees,
Broad-leaved banana, lime, and stately palm,
I muse of June in lands beyond the seas,
 Far from this realm of calm.
The droning of cicadas fills the air,
 And captive kites complain with drowsy tone ;
The day is golden, and the green earth fair,
 All through the Summer zone.
A thousand blended sweets diffuse their charm
 From myriads of flowers on every hand,
And sensuous pleasure seems no sinful harm
 Within this “Lotus-land.”
Strange that, surrounded by a world so bright,
 Thought should play truant and escape control;
Strange that the fiend unrest should try his might
 To captivate the soul.

JUNE MEMORIES FROM THE TROPICS.

But when across the equatorial line
The sun advances northward day by day,
Remembrance comes to take this heart of mine
And carry it away.

For then I know that on the hills of home,
Still bare and sad from winter's snowy reign,
A magic transformation soon will come
And beauty rule again.

Then from the glowing sameness of this land,
Although Lethean in its subtle charm,
I long to go and once more haply stand
Upon my father's farm.
Once more, on some sweet morning of the spring,
When all around is hushed and very still,
I long to hear the robin-redbreast sing
And listen to the mill ;

JUNE MEMORIES FROM THE TROPICS.

The rustic saw-mill, just behind the wood,
Where there was skating in the winter days,
And where in spring a lovely lily-brood
And willows met the gaze.

A little down the stream a meadow spread,
Until it came close to the school-house door ;
While near, the lonely grave-yard hid its dead,
In the sad, glad days of yore.

Clear as the scenery of a waking dream,
Half filled with pleasure, half with tearful pain,
Those days and years of my lost boyhood seem,
When called to view again.

My fondest recollection treasures yet
The revelation of each wondrous day,
When buttercup and purple violet
Vied to embellish May.

JUNE MEMORIES FROM THE TROPICS.

Then like the soothing murmur of the sea,
Or magic measure of some grand old tune,
Come sweetest floral memories to me
From green and lovely June.
And though the miracle of life each day
In chains of tropic splendor bind me here,
I sigh, alas ! that I am far away
From scenes that are so dear.

Colon, 1880.

COME SOON!

Hastens my dear one to her tropic nest ?
Shares her fond heart the burden of unrest,
With which mine own is evermore opprest,
When she is gone ?
Will her dear feet soon press this Summer shore,
And will the touches of her hand once more,
Her smile and voice, console me as of yore,
In love's fair dawn ?

I *know* she comes ! Unless, unless the snows
Have spread o'er her their mantle of repose !
Ah, heart of mine, forecast the bitter woes
So surely thine
If this should be ! But no. I will not grant
A fear so direful should my spirit haunt.
Hope shall befriend me and shall sweetly chant
Her lay divine.

COME SOON !

So sure it seems that this great happiness
Will soon be mine—my darling to caress,
Gaze in her eyes, and to my bosom press

Her form so fair—

That I have told the secret to the flowers ;
And now, in unison, we count the hours,
Ere with red roses from their fragrant bowers

I'll deck her hair.

It is no longer gone than yesterday,
A graceful bamboo bent its head o'er me,
Reclining by my glorious blue sea—

Blue sky above—

And nodding “ yes ” to all my questionings,
Gave the sweet promise that with snowy wings
Spread to the gales, e'en now the swift ship brings

My dearest love.

COME SOON!

My heart is full of her ! When I awake,
The doves are cooing for her dear love's sake ;
The palms are waving and the foam-crests break
Along the shore.

The warm winds whisper lovingly of her,
When in the dreamy air they are astir ;
O, she shall be my only comforter
For evermore !

THE MAJORITY.

How fare they all, they of the pallid faces,
Beyond our power to beckon their return ?
How is it with them in the shadow places ?
 How shall we learn
Their solemn secret ? How can we discover,
 By any earnest seeking, the true way
Unto the knowing in what realm they hover,
 In what high day,
Or in what sombre shadows of the night,
They are forever hidden from our sight ?

THE MAJORITY.

We question vainly. Yet it somehow pleases,
When they have spoken the last sad good-bye,
It somehow half the pain of parting eases,
 That in the sky,
In the vast solitudes of stars and spaces,
 There may be consciousness and life and hope,
And that when we must yield to death's embraces,
 There may be scope
For the unfolding of the better powers,
So sadly stifled in this life of ours.

MY FRIEND.

It may be a dream that our gruesome fate
 Will ever bestow,
The faultless comrade, with heart so great
 In weal or woe,
That faith shall abide and an equal trust
 Bind two in one,
Till day is night and dust is dust
 And life is done.

But I will seek and will hope to find,
 Until the end,
When with mists of death my eyes grow blind,
 This friend, my friend !

And when found, lest that hooks of steel should
 part
 And yield control,
We will fetter each other heart to heart,
 In bonds of soul.

EQUATORIAL.

My soul awakes when the jaguar wakes,
As the sun withdraws his ray;
Throws off the day and awakes and shakes,
With a jaguar-hunger for prey ;

Awakes from the dull routine, and slakes
Its so fiercely burning thirst,
In the west, where the crimson sunset lakes
Bathe the isles of gold immersed.

In the sunset first its fierce hunger and thirst
Does my craving soul allay,
Where mid gleams of glory, burst on burst,
Night folds away the day;

EQUATORIAL.

Then far afloat on the sea remote,
Where fringes of rain-clouds trail,
Or near the shore where a silent boat
Sails past with a palm-branch sail ;

Down where the deck of the cyclone wreck
Is rotting upon the reef,
The red waves rise like a serpent's neck,
And recoil like a guilty thief.

And east, in the East ! Did ever wild beast,
In the rage of a caged unrest,
Turn east and west, and west and east,
As I turn east and west ?

For a full moon rides the azure tides,
And pours down the airy way
Floods gossamer soft as the veil that hides
A queen on her bridal day !

EQUATORIAL.

Elate, elate ! When the hunter, Fate,
Speeds his swift and deadly dart—
Sate, with the blood of sunsets sate,
And of beauty's beating heart—

Perhaps in a clime that is more sublime
My semblance again may roam,
To prey on the shores where Father Time
Shall have found an eternal home !

Colon, 1887.

THE BANANA PLANTER.

At a bend of Rio Chagres, near the lonely
Carib sea,
Stands the palm-thatched hut of Sanchez, and a
planter bold is he.
Descended from a Spaniard who came in early
days,
With the horde of treasure-seekers, that with
endless prayer and praise
Preyed truly on the natives they found along
their track,
His complexion, I must tell you, for a certainty
is black.
It is possibly the climate ; for the sun has horrid
ways
Of tanning skins of people with his horrid torrid
rays ;

THE BANANA PLANTER.

The fairest grow off-colored, and in time there
may be doubt

Whether blood of pure hidalgo may not come
to peter out.

But in the case of Sanchez—Don Carlos he is
styled—

When facts are squarely stated, he was his
mother's child ;

And she, without a question, save some that
muddle things,

Was the royal far-off daughter of a line of
Congo kings.

And now, beside the river, with fair vistas up
and down,

Where the hills are gay in sunshine and dark
when storm-clouds frown,

Their robes of verdure blending with the bloom
of countless flowers,

THE BANANA PLANTER.

Inwrought by Mother Nature as she weaves the
Web of Hours,

Where the peacefulness of summer broods low
in lovely skies,

And life, a dream of beauty, cheats unac-
customed eyes,

This banana planter liveth ; nor dwelleth he
alone ;

For the mother of his children, with lineage like
his own—

Castilian in the background with Timbuctoo at
the fore—

Has borne as many children as ever mother bore,
And yet survived.

At present, in that grove of tropic trees,
Whose fruit-crop is exported to New York
across the seas,

To be eaten there quite thoughtless of how or
whence it came,

THE BANANA PLANTER.

Nor yet the slightest wonder how or whence it
took its name,
Or knowledge of the banner-broad, magnificent
great leaves,
Unfolded like as banners on the balm of tropic
eves,
To wave with lazy motion, or in the morning
sun
Resembling fair transparencies, goodly to gaze
upon,
Pale-green against the glory of the fervid east-
ern sky—
At present, I was saying, should the curious
passer-by
Desire to see Don Carlos and his endless
progeny,
To investigate the customs and the hospitality
Of the native of the jungle, he need entertain no
fear

THE BANANA PLANTER.

He will not be duly welcomed with the best of native cheer.

Do not hesitate to enter ; for though the curs be rude,

And rush out helter-skelter, like a hungry wolfish brood,

There is seldom any danger that the stranger will be hurt,

Though such a snarly welcome might be thought a trifle curt.

The hut was planned for coolness ; and its architect took pains

To leave it open to the winds, so the roof kept out the rains ;

And it has the double merit as a tropical abode, That while it is *al fresco* it is likewise *à la mode*.

Full details might be tiresome ; but an outline let me give,

THE BANANA PLANTER.

Of the free and easy manner in which these
people live—

These “dusky children of the sun,” to use a
poet’s flight,

The “dusky” meaning, if you please, the color
of the night.

As for raiment: In a climate where the sum-
mer never fails,

It would be an utter nuisance to assume the
swallow-tails,

The corsages and so forth which the fashionable
fates

Impose upon poor devils there in Europe and
the States.

And therefore Carlos Sanchez, like a sensible
old Don,

Feels more at ease and happier with little cloth-
ing on ;

THE BANANA PLANTER.

While Señora, as a model for the study of the
nude

Would undoubtedly seem awful in the judgment
of the prude.

While the children! Did you ever! No, you
never, I declare!

But why pursue a subject that is so very bare?

Let us rather enter in, or enter under, shall I
say,

Since the roof alone is all there is between us
and the day.

Four sturdy posts are planted, and upon them
there is placed

The tent-like superstructure; then the domicile
is graced

With hammocks for siesta, and some skillets,
pots and pans,

THE BANANA PLANTER.

And these are supplemented by a wealth of empty cans,
Which do duty in the menage quite as bravely as the best
Of Dresden or of Venice. And as for place of rest,
A notched post in the centre of this novel tenement
Leads the climber to an attic, where no doubt supreme content
Attends the huddled sleepers, when the shadows of the night
Fall around the home of Sanchez and the tropic stars are bright.

But see them in the evening ere the hour for sleep has come,
Disporting to the music of a kind of native drum ;

THE BANANA PLANTER.

The tum-tum, the fandango ! and in all the realms of earth,
I can positively promise no more jollity and mirth.
The neighbors all assemble, and each frisky girl and boy
Is ready for the frolic ; each is eager to enjoy
The intoxicating motion or the ravishing repose,
The only jewel visible a fire-fly or a rose !

Their social rules are simple, yet I do not hesitate
To venture the assertion that their virtues are as great,
Allowing for the latitude (which is said to interfere
Very sadly with the ethics of the conjugal career),

THE BANANA PLANTER.

As those of northern people who are liable to
make
A terrible commotion when propriety's at stake.

And so, upon the river, with fair vistas up and
down,
Removed from all the worriment of city and of
town,
Surrounded by a fairyland that knows no fall-
ing leaf,
Where the butterflies are radiant and the birds
surpass belief,
Where all things thrive and prosper and are
glorious to see
(Save the pallid apparitions of those whom
destiny
Has led captive from the Northland, and the
fevers have assailed),

THE BANANA PLANTER.

I will leave our friend Don Carlos, with the
hope I haven't failed
To interest the reader of this imperfect lay,
Whose humble servant I'll remain forever and
a day !

October, 1888.

EXTREMES.

The vultures floating in the upper air,
On wide-expanded wings beneath the blue,
Circle on wider circle within view,
Higher and higher still, until the fair
Far vision builds a splendid dream, with care
And sordidness excluded, and a new
High noble life made possible and true :
This wins my spirit from its old despair.
But when the vulture-nature once again
Prevails above the instinct that aspires,
And downward, at the call of low desires,
Headlong with folded plumes they plunge, the
 pain,
And all the grief of life come back amain :
Ah, then hope mocks, and love and faith seem
 liars.

Colon.

THE REVERENT MOOD.

When thunders echo through the midnight sky,
And lightnings flash with jagged forks of fire
From black cloud-walls of storm, as if the ire,
Long pent by fate, descended from on high,
While, clustered in a mute expectancy,
The palm trees tremble on the wild sea-shore,
And Doom seems pending in the awful roar—
My heart leaps outward with a reverent cry ;
For in this tropic wonder-world of night
And elemental passion, there abide
Deep meanings of the Power that is the guide
And arbiter of destiny, whose might
Swayeth the boundless universe aright,
And yet doth paint the lily in its pride.

IN THE MORNING.

What time the shadows of the night are fleeing
Before the sunrise, and the darkness yields,
A fine delight thrills all the bounds of being,
As I stray lonely in the summer fields.

For Nature comes to me in smiling token
Of loving kindness to again declare
The olden promise she has never broken,
That she has made of me a favored heir.

“I give to thee, in absolute fee-simple,
To have,” she says, “and to forever hold,
All these my riches ; from where valleys dimple
The lovely prospect, to where hills are bold

IN THE MORNING.

Against the ether ! ” And I look and listen,
As thus she speaks the message of the morn,
What time my tear-drops with the dew-drops
glisten,
Standing enraptured near the growing corn !

All mine ! fair thanks to thee, most royal mother !
Thy largess gives the ills of life surcease.
To thee alone I owe, and to none other,
This golden silence, this ideal peace !

Wiesbaden, July, 1888.

IN THE EVENING.

As when a dawn of doubtful promise ends
In cold and cloudy certainty of storm,
Thus oft the hopes of life's beginning form
A sun-gleam only, that full early blends
With tempest ; and before fair weather sends
White truce, the surges of time's high-tide roar
With anger round the noonday ; and the shore
Of eveningtime with wreck and wrath portends.
And yet, so changeful are the hope and fear
Which rule the destinies of men and days,
That when the sunset opens wide the fold
Of peace and slumber, there will oft appear,
Above the portals of night's gathering haze,
Purple and rose and wealth of dreamland gold.

Wiesbaden, July, 1888.

AT PANAMA.

There is a palm beside my open door,
Whose leaves the Southern Cross shines nightly
through.

Within its dusky shadow evermore,
On all fair eves, when lightly falls the dew,
The South Sea keeps a love-tryst to renew
Its amour with the low-reclining land,
Lighting its soft approaches to my view
With phosphorescent gleams on every hand,
Like drowning stars, lost from heaven's radiant
band.

Within this syren-soothing calm I come,
Willing of mind to sink into repose.
Lulled by the drowsy summer-insect hum
(My cares left yonder at the lost day's close),
I share existence with the night-blown rose,

AT PANAMA.

Whose soul of fragrance trembles in the air.
Escaped from self and from all lesser foes,
Star-crowned, sea-comforted, I once more dare
To kiss the lips of love and twine her glorious hair.

The Critic, 1881.

DOUBT.

Vex me no more ; no longer fill my heart
With strange unrest so near akin to pain.
Fill up the doubting void, and bid depart
The nameless shadow which no mortal art
Can banish never to return again.

Break thy sad spell ; release the captive, Hope,
So sadly pining for the morning light.
Undo the bonds of Charity and ope
Faith's slumbering vision to the wider scope
Of an immortal day beyond the night.

O, cease thy power ; let human love rejoice
That the sweet kisses of its early bloom
Shall be perennial ; that smile and voice,
That form and features of the heart's fond choice,
Shall live again beyond the cruel tomb.

DOUBT.

I will not yield ! The foaming tide may rave,
And threaten direful wreck of all my love ;
The eager tempest still shall find me brave,
With full reliance on the God who gave,
That He will land us on his shores above.

Harper's Magazine, 1873.

MARIE.

Let me breathe in a whisper soft and low,
To be heard alone by thee,
One word of the love, of the passionate glow,
Of my heart for my own Marie.

Since the hour we met, when the starlit night
Seemed a mantle of jewels to be,
No thought of joy, no dream of delight,
Has been mine save of thee, Marie.

Far, far from thy side the rude fates of life
May drift me, with stern decree,
But midst all the storm and toil of its strife,
I shall never cease loving Marie.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

A REMINISCENCE.

I.

The years go sweeping onward in their course,
Summers and winters tell their constant
round,

Brave youth and hardy manhood lose their
force,

Life in the fetters of old age lies bound.

The story soon is told of each and all

Who've lived, and loved, and suffered 'neath
heaven's dome !

Then would I briefly from the past recall

Dear father, mother, friends and early home.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Scant welcome was there, when afar he came
 Into the wild—that sturdy, earnest man—
His worldly fortune nothing but good name
 And that brave-hearted courage which outran
All timid fears and bade him undertake,
 There, in the endless forest's leafy gloom,
His way in life to resolutely make,
 Though toil and peril should pronounce his
 doom.

Scant welcome ! For as yet the Indian trod
 Those virgin wilds. The wolf, the bear, and
 deer
Scented his footsteps on the mossy sod,
 Ere yet his rifle they had learned to fear.
Wife of his bosom and the younglings small
 Nestled all closely in the silence there,
Nor vainly faltered their low trembling call
 For Heaven's protection and the angels' care.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Unaided and alone wild nature to undo,
From earliest dawn till darkness filled the air,
His manly blows fell ceaselessly and true,
Till the prone forest lighted the red glare
Of the wild night-fires, whose consuming flame
Swept the felled monarchs airward one by
one,
Until the blossoming of few summers came
Ere fruitful acres smiled out in the sun.

Ever unwearied by rough daily toil,
This hero of the wildwood still could find,
By evening's fire-glow or the sacred oil
Of midnight lamps some solace for the mind.
With wondrous energies of hand and brain
He wrought unceasingly ; and amid all,
Through storm and sunshine, pleasure sweet or
pain,
Faith in God's mercy e'er sustained his soul !

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Oh ! that my loving memory of him
Might cast the fetters from this unskilled
hand
And teach my heart more faithfully to limn
The noble portraiture. Could I command
Fair Inspiration's lyre, then would I sing
The meed of honor due, with grateful pride
And depths of feeling, like the floods of spring
Sweeping the vales with inundation wide.

Since lesser gifts are mine, and they untried,
A simple record let me then essay,
With kind affection for my gentle guide
While in the fields of memory I stray.
And let me pass those toilsome early years—
The brave endeavors that their pages fill—
To linger in the sunlight that endears
For aye and aye the old Home on the Hill !

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Time softens all it touches here below,
And sheds a mild effulgence o'er the past,
Bridging the gulfs of weariness and woe
With bow as bright as that which is o'ercast
The fabled distances 'twixt earth and heaven,
On which, 'tis sung, the radiant angels tread
In viewless glory, when a soul is given
Into their keeping, while we mourn the dead.

The little daily joys and cares we knew,
The scenes and faces of those yesterdays,
Come to our minds all freshly in review,
From out the misty, intervening haze
Of time and distance, when perchance we turn
Thought's mirror backward. Then may we
behold,
Fair as the clouds that in the sunset burn
On summer evenings, the dear forms of old.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

'Tis said that hearts resemble ocean shells,
 Cast by the moaning billows on the shore ;
If one be taken, it forever tells
 The story of the white foam's ceaseless roar—
As if some fairy of the dark-hued deep,
 Imprisoned there, pined ever to be free,
To wing her flight back where her kindred keep
 Their mystic vigils deep down in the sea.

If this be true of others, then my own
 Forms no exception to the common lot.
'Tis not the echo of a ceaseless moan
 For fair days squandered, ne'er to be forgot,
But day or night, waking or wrapt in dreams,
 The home of childhood constantly appears
Before my vision, and forever teems
 With light and shadow, sunny smiles and
 tears.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

First in procession in fair memory's train,
The dearest mother a fond child e'er knew,
Or ever gently soothed a young heart's pain,
Appears before my retrospective view.
Who of that household, widely scattered now,
Can think of her devoted love and care
Nor wonder that the sorely bended bough
Ne'er broke beneath the weight of fruit it bare ?

The gentle murmur of the tropic sea,
When winds are hushed to rest beneath the
moon,
Can never seem so sadly sweet to me
As the far echoes of dear "Bonnie Doon,"
As mother sang it, at the spinning wheel,
So deftly by her busy fingers plied,
While she anon would loving glances steal
Towards the infant cradled by her side.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Time never can efface till end of days
The memory of her never-ending cares
And fond solicitude, lest in the ways
Of untried life there *might* be hidden snares,
To trap the unwary feet of those whom she,
Like gentlest shepherdess beneath the sun,
Had watched and guarded from calamity
Each hour and moment since their lives begun.

And what a crowded home it was indeed
When all were gathered 'neath the parent roof,
Before the elder children took the lead
And went forth battling in their own behoof !
And what a busy hive, where every one
Was taught the value of each passing hour,
Nor idle hands left hardest task undone
Which fell within the limits of their power !

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Each season brought its constant round of toil,
Commencing with the earliest days of spring,
Ere the snows melted from the frozen soil
Or trees began to bud or birds to sing.
The leafless forest was invaded then,
With axe and spile the sugar-maple sought,
And to the camp within its woody glen
The sap, when gathered, speedily was brought.

The fires beneath the cauldrons then were made,
To burn all day, with fervent, even heat,
And often were our homeward steps delayed
Till nightfall found day's labors incomplete.
Oh ! then what happiness to gather round
The ruddy fire-glow, in the chill night air,
While the grim darkness echoed back the sound
Of merry songs, and laughter free from care.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

What joy the fragrant syrup to bail out,
All steaming hot, and then to bear it home,
In buckets fixed with yoke and hoop so stout
No danger of its spilling e'er could come.
What pleasant welcome kindly faces wore
For the belated ; and with what good cheer,
Hearty though homely, from our ample store,
The supper table waited for us there !

Plain, rustic people were we, true enough !
Unlearned of fashion and all wealth can give,
Treading no flowery pathway, but the rough
And rocky road wherein the poor must strive.
But is there one of us who would forget
Those long-lost happy sugar-making days ?
Or who indeed can look without regret
Back to the joys and griefs of rural ways ?

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Then April came, with sun and rain which took
The snow away and brought the first spring
flowers ;
The wheat and grass began to bear the look
Of coming summer, while the hidden powers
Within the hearts of all the leafless trees,
From winter's bondage once again set free,
Began to swell the buds ; then by degrees
The whole world grew most wondrous fair to
see,
All May ; until one morn bright June came forth,
Arrayed in beauteous robes of green and gold !
The south winds blew so softly on the north
From the far Tropics, that the birds made bold
To come in flocks to sing and build their nests
Within the garden trees and 'neath the eaves ;
The lilacs blossomed and the locust crests
Were green as sea-waves with their wealth of
leaves.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Queen of the Northern year, O dearest June !
How bright thy memories flow o'er my soul !
How thy warm sunlight, like a Southern noon,
Floods all my being with its bright control,
Until I dream Arcadia must have lain
On thy fair borders ; and the Isle of Springs,
In view from "visioning heights" along thy
main,
Wafted across the wave on viewless wings

Odor of Lotus so divinely sweet,
That, breathing it, the spirit fain must yield
To the intoxicating wish to eat
And court forgetfulness ! Yet sadly sealed
Has been thy book for me this many a day ;
Though the slightest recollection of thy face—
The briars growing in the woodland way,
The cherries blushing at thy tender grace,

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

The chestnuts planted by the garden wall
By hand now planting fairer fields than these,
The apple blossoms whose sweet eyes recall
The humble cottage mid the forest trees,
Upon the spot where now they yield their fruit,
Beside the graves of those who've gone to
sleep
With the cold marble pointing white and mute
Above their slumbers to the upper deep—
These, and a thousand tenderest replies
Come to my questioning heart across the waste
Of time and distance, June ! Appealing eyes
Steal on my thoughts ; and if I could but haste
To swifter measure, this, my poor lame verse,
Across the years I'd beckon them to come,
And for one happy hour those scenes rehearse
Which hold my heart of hearts ; and then be
dumb.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

II.

A swallow does not make the summer ; so
June with her glory does not make the year.
She may be queen, and *is* ; but cannot go
Beyond her all too briefly glorious sphere.
Her warmth and beauty end not with her sway,
But, when her sceptre passes to her kin,
Intensified in passion day by day,
They stimulate all nature, and begin,
Ere July well has caught the reins of power,
To bend the grasses by the meadow brook
Beneath the lowering of the thunder shower,
And burn the tassels of the corn to look
Chestnut. And as the bright days pass,
The sheep, all sheared, are panting 'neath the
shade,
And the tired oxen, stretched upon the grass,
Seem wondering why such heat was ever made.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

'Twas wonderful to watch, as the swift days
Fell into shining rows of summer weeks,
While August suns burned up the dusty ways
And dried the springs which fed the crystal
creeks,
By what strange alchemy the waving wheat
Was turned to golden billows in the breeze !
The reapers looking like a tiny fleet
Rocking its sunny way through yellow seas !
The harvest apples and the berries red,
How precious sweet they seemed in those old
days !
And the cool root-beer dearest mother made
For the tired harvesters ! Oh ! should delays
Of purgatorial nature keep us back
From quick reception in the world on high,
Whene'er our path leads up the misty track
Towards the home we hope for by and by—

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Could we but be supplied in such dire plight,
With plenteous draughts from such another
store,

I doubt the torments that could cause us quite
To leave, without regret, that doubtful shore !
You smile ? You may ; and so indeed would I,
If once again beneath the harvest tree,
The yellow sunlight burning up the sky,
One cooling goblet were vouchsafed to me !

It is perhaps the dearest gift to own
Of any other, that, when youth has fled,
All the familiar scenes and faces gone
Among the distant or laid with the dead,
One may forget the little ills which flecked
Life's happy current, nor remember aught
To mar the beauty of the retrospect,
Though tenderest tears flow quickly when a
thought

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Or memory comes of some lost love or hope,
Long dead and buried with the withered
leaves
Of life's fair roses ; never to look up
Above its grave ! Alas ! this truly grieves !
And yet, and yet, it is a grief *so* dear,
So sacred and so tender, that the heart,
Sorrowing, rejoices ; and its fear
Through its great love is bidden to depart.

Thus it has come to pass, in this at least,
That I forgot the rough and painful toil,
Early and late, the care and work that ceased
Only when Sunday came, our thoughts to call
For a brief space away from earthly things.
Or, if not quite forgot, so little weighed
That their remembrance never o'er me brings
A sad reflection or a passing shade

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Of sorrow or regret, that in their place
Luxurious ease had not held quiet sway.
With a glad heart I look them in the face
And say—"Oh! yes; but that was far away!"
So very far that if I did not know
Realities, or had not ever known,
I might imagine it a fairy plow
I held that day, when, catching on a stone,

It threw me underneath the horses' feet
In deadly peril! Or I might go back
Among the hay, and say the lad I greet,
So tired and sick with mowing as to lack
The power to raise his head to make reply,
Being so much alike, perhaps was me.
What then? The blue and tranquil summer sky
That day gave promise of Eternity!

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

And the next evening ! Can I, can I pass
Along the line of memory's shining nets,
Sometimes let down into those deeps, alas !
So growing deeper with each sun that sets,
Nor stop one little moment in *that* eve,
Darkened by storm and wild with thunder-
clouds ?

Did the red flashes of the lightning leave
No memory of it, which my heart enshrouds ?

The cows were hastened homeward from the
wood
Before its coming ; and the milking-pails
Were being filled as fast as e'er we could
Press the full udders. But no haste avails !
The wind tossed up the locust branches high
For one brief moment ; then the furious rain
Came swooping downwards from the angry sky,
So sudden that no shelter could we gain.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

To "stand and take it" was not very much,
 Seeing the cows were there for company.
(Better it may be to have been in such
 Than certain other in this world we see.)
A sudden wish to brave it was my own,
 A quick desire to stand there and behold
The lightning rend the clouds, and hear them
 groan
And roar and peal their thunders on the world !

With head uncovered and with face upturned—
 The storm ablaze and raging for an hour,
As though Inferno in the heavens burned
 And Neptune battled to subdue its power—
The boy, untroubled by a sense of fear,
 His soul imbued with reverent love and awe,
Remained, lone witness, until night drew near
 To break the spell and bid the clouds withdraw.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Description fails the glory to portray,
 Just as the fury of the tempest ceased.
The sinking splendors of the king of day,
 Burned in the evening heavens from west to
 east ;
And when the gorgeous after-sunset glow
 Inflamed the rising mists with hues divine,
When rose and gold and purple blent to show
 The power of God—the littleness of mine—

My all untutored mind and heart caught up,
 In their scant treasury of precious things,
At least a faint portrayal. And my hope,
 O'erflying, may be, with her slender wings
The bounds of prudence, trustfully relies,
 When morning dawns for us and life above
Begins by ending here, the sinless skies
 Will beam upon us with such light of love !

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

III.

The fairest sight of all the world to see
Is the ripe fruit developed from its germ,
Rich with the bloom of full maturity ;
As when love's early bliss has had its term,
And youthful longings have been lulled to sleep,
Within the rounded beauty with which time
Invests the beautiful. Power more deep
And more resistless than of sweetest prime

Dwells in perfected passion ; power to sip
Life's nectar from the overflowing brim,
Or to withhold anon the thirsting lip,
Lest from excess the light of love grow dim.
Type and dear emblem of those golden days,
The Northern Autumn, wearing kingly crown
Of plenty, blent with gracious beauty, lays
On the fair earth its regal treasures down.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

My eyes have seen an island of the sea,
Where wild Atlantic meets the Carib wave,
Which in its beauty seems fit simile
For nature's triumph when at last she gave
September and October to the year.
It rises from its emerald sea-girt shore,
With a wide, lovely sweep into the clear
Eternal skies, where fancy loves to soar,

As though a sentient soul within had said,
“I now will draw my lines so wondrous fair,
From my warm feet e'en to my mountain head,
Towering so grandly through the dreamy air,
Men shall be fain to call me beautiful ;
And as they sail away shall turn to gaze
Upon my form, which shall their souls enthrall
With its remembrance to their latest days.”

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Who that has parted from a Northern home,
Its hills and vales, its streams and forest trees,
The seas of fortune far away to roam,
Does not recall, while sailing on the breeze
That bears him further still forevermore
From all those scenes dear to his inmost soul,
September, sweeping up from Summer's shore
To proud October, monarch of them all !

IV.

If God the power had given unto me,
To clothe with language what my heart would
sing,
I do not think it would my longing be
Sublime conceptions from great heights to
bring,
But to portray with all the love I feel
Dear homely pictures of the things I've seen,
Or dreamed of, so that I might break the seal
Of those sweet founts that keep the memory
green.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Age follows youth, and fatefully grim death,
 Like a dire vampire, drinks the blood of life ;
And winds will seaward blow, with wafting
 breath,
Tho' on the shore hands wave and hearts are rife
With vision-blinding sorrow ; darkness comes
 All as securely as the dawn of day ;
But while this life endures, in earthly homes
 Shall brightly beam affection's gentle ray.

Yea, beam and beam ; and so illume the track—
 Downward or upward, whichsoe'er it be—
From youth to age, that, looking fondly back,
 As eyes from mountain heights search all the
 sea,
Or from the sea peer tow'rd the purple glooms,
 The simplest objects shall forever glow
Like crimson cloudlets or like beauty's blooms,
 As warm as summer and as pure as snow.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

'Tis love, perhaps, and distance purify,
And time. At least they strip the dross away
From those, our idols, of the days gone by,
And to the grave consign whate'er was clay.
So, it is scarcely dear old Pacer now,
With his white face and feet and kindly eyes,
Patient and good in carriage or at plow,
That half rejoices me and half brings sighs ;

Nor Bose, the watchful guardian of the night,
All gray with age, and faithful as the sun
In whose warm rays and life-restoring light
He basked and dreamed of canine glory won
In youth ; nor yet my little turkey chicks,
My first and last, whose loss I sorely grieved,
Nine beauties, killed by one of those sad tricks
Men should not tell to boys to be believed ;

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Nor even yet my Charley-colt so fine,
Dun-colored, zebra-legged, with stripe of
brown
From mane to tail—how proud to call him mine !
Not all of these nor all I could write down,
Objects themselves, do hold my heart in thrall,
But their remembrance is so dearly prized,
That until faded are life's treasures all,
They shall remain for aye idealized.

A thronging throng ! Like spirits of the air,
They come and hover round me in the night,
Waking or sleeping, and corroding care
Is banished from my “Gardens of Delight,”
Wherein I sit, to reckon o'er and o'er
That rosary of scenes and seasons dear,
Beginning with the violet-sweet shore
Of Spring, and only ending with the year.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Far more enchanting than all else before,
Awaking longings after something higher,
More perfect and diviner, kept in store
In climes immortal, to which souls aspire,
Appear those hazy Indian-summer days,
When the Autumnal frosts had tinged the leaves
With glorious hues, setting the world ablaze,
And Ceres bound her last and fairest sheaves.

v.

My full heart lingers and would gladly dwell
Loving and long mid those endearing scenes,
Would fain to kindred hearts the story tell,
How kindly nature, with o'erflowing means,
Filled all the land with plenty, and arrayed
The earth in richest robes of loveliness.
Alas ! by yea nor nay can be delayed
The chariot wheels of Time. Onward they
press,

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Forever, crushing out the wine and blood
 Of life alike. Ne'er sweetest songs of joy,
Nor saddest sighs of sorrow, yet withstood
 One briefest moment ; nor can man employ,
Nor art, nor power, so Godlike as to stay,
 By so much as a breath, their ceaseless roll ;
But onward, ever onward, day by day,
 They near the borderland 'tween sense and
 soul,

Twixt seen and unseen, where dwell bandit
 loves,
And hopes and brave imaginings which go
Raiding beyond the line, e'en to those groves
 Of amaranthine verdure, where we know
The loved and lost abide ; returning oft,
 Sprinkled with dews from the celestial skies
And odor-laden with the fragrance soft
 Of shores whereon the Mounts of Bliss arise.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Wherefore, my relics of that former day,
How dear soever they may be to me,
Must be laid by, although to them I may
Cling as the drowning unto wrecks at sea.
And when November merges her sad sigh,
Over the fallen leaf, in Winter's moan,
And when her tears, descending from the sky,
Are chilled and frozen, cold as hearts of stone,

Then must I lingeringly my gaze withdraw,
And wave across the gulfs a fond adieu !
Nor am I very sad ; for by that law
Of love, which ever keeps the true love true,
Through correspondence shall my own heart be
With quiet joy and happiness elate,
Through and o'er all that Fate may bring to me,
Until I reach the spirit's high estate.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Good-bye ! Across the raging desert sea,
From this fair, tropic, ever-blooming land,
Whereto kind Fortune's breezes wafted me,
I send such greeting as I could command.
Oh ! could the language I but here translate,
In which surrounding nature finds a voice !
Oh ! if the rushing of bright wings would wait
To teach the art to me, it would rejoice

My inmost being ! Then, dear Home of youth,
And all the Loves that I did know therein,
Friends still on earth, and even ye the truth
Who know of life beyond this vale of sin,
The soul of Summer, pulsing through my own,
Should beat such bars of tuneful melody
As ye might reckon sweet, and undertone
All sweetly back in echo unto me.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Oh ! then these fairy-haunted woods and streams,
These gorgeous birds and ever-blooming
flowers,
This never-ending June, this land of dreams,
Where in delicious languor die the hours,
Should yield the secrets of their hearts to mine,
Enrapt and climbing purple heights of bliss,
Unknown on earth, save when the gods combine,
And gleam the glories of their worlds on this.

The Palms should whisper what sweet messages
They're waving upward, towards the bending
sky, [breeze.
Stirred by the light, warm breathings of the
The Cactuses should tell the secret why
Their sweetest sister* bloometh in the night,
Unfolding her white heart with trembling haste.
And, Holy Orchid,† ye should glad my sight,
Where ye do hide, within the wildering waste,

* Night-blooming Cereus.

† Espiritu-Santo or Holy Ghost flower.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

With vision of thy transformation strange,
From heart of flower to wondrous form of dove !
All things soever, in the mystic range
Of tropic nature, from the skies above
Unto the glistening archipelagoes
Of emerald islands, sunning in the wave,
Would I waft northward, soft as wind that blows
Billows of violets around a grave.

And you, to pleasure whom these lines I've
penned,
To whom I speed them o'er the deep so far,
My loving wife, my counsellor, my friend,
My inspiration and my light, my star !
If, when you read them o'er, your heart replies
In echo, and a dear responsive chord
Of loving thought beams from your loving eyes,
When meeting mine, I shall have my reward.

Written at Colon, Isthmus of Panama.

AN ORATION:

DELIVERED AT THE UNITED STATES CONSULATE,
ASPINWALL, JULY 4TH, 1866.

ORATION.

THE Century Plant is said to awaken with a throb of beauty and yield up its long hidden heart in blossom only once in a hundred years. During the interval, it dreams in rapt silence and obscurity of the coming anniversary, when it may unfold its floral beauties to the dear light of heaven and the wondering gaze of man. More fortunate than this natural wonder, the divine implantation of love of freedom, so universally and deeply rooted in man's nature, always growing to greater beauty and perfection, has, with us at least, its yearly anniversary, and stirs the great American heart with one universal thrill and joyous outburst on each recurrence of this, "The Day we celebrate."

ORATION.

It is a happy thought for us, that we are not alone in our glad and devoted observance of the day. Not only on the dear home shores, but in every clime, our widely scattered countrymen, fired with the same spirit of loyalty and love that is animating us, are this hour engaged in the same happy devotion to the memory of the birth and traditions of our common country.

We are accustomed to call this a glorious day, and ours a glorious land. We are apt to boast our emblematic eagle, mid its halo of stars, and our waving red, white, and blue, presided over by the protecting genius of our patron goddess, the proudest insignia of any nation. Others sometimes call us enthusiastic, romantic, bombastic, if you will, and smile with no gentle cynicism at our claims to greatness. Elder nations, now in the sere and yellow of their days, are slow to admit the vigorous, sturdy manhood of our early prime. But where, oh ! where, on God's green earth shall the gaze of the world be turned for the equal of our example? Comparisons

ORATION.

are always odious, it is said, therefore not graceful on an occasion of festivity :

“ Let them buried lie.”

Let other nations and peoples boast their fill, while we will be content with ourselves ; and reverently let us ask,

“ In the light of God’s great glory,
Who are we ? What are we ? ”

Have we aught of which to be proud ? Does the history of our past encourage us ? Let us consult it.

“ The breaking waves dashed high
On a stern and rockbound coast,”

one wintry day scarce two hundred and fifty years ago. America was then a wild from sea to mountain range, and thence to the farthest unknown ocean. The Indian and wild beast held the wilderness undisputed. A wide continent still slumbered in the arms of its natal savageism. Nature, the sovereign, held sway in her sumptuous, queenly grandeur o’er the wild expanse, the subjects of her laws numbering only savage men and beasts, wild mountain ranges, lakes of magnificent

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beauty, and deep, endless forests, warmed by the genial sunlight into majestic life, watered by a thousand rushing rivers and swayed by the wild winds of heaven.

There was no Hudson, or Ohio, or James, or Connecticut, or Tennessee, or Columbia, or Missouri, or mighty Mississippi, then; no Mount Washington, or Ascutney, or Peaks of Otter, or bold Point Lookout, or Alleghany, or grand Rocky Mountain chains; no Superior, or Ontario, or lovely George, or Great Salt Desert lakes; no multitude of cities, busy centres all of wealth and commerce—but instead, a nameless, trackless, almost boundless wild, awaiting in blindness and darkness the coming Messiah of civilization.

Good old Rip Van Winkle, upon awaking from his slumber of many years, sought for the scenes familiar to his closing vision. A new world surrounded him, and the sleeper searched in vain for traces of the past. They were gone! and he was left wondering and lamenting—a fossil of a former

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creation. Imagine for an instant that we outsleep the sleepy Dutchman, and going back to the time when that brave hearted

“ Band of exiles moored their bark
On the wild New England shore,”

we consign to oblivious dreams the two and a half intervening centuries, and open our eyes on this auspicious day.

What scene of enchantment is this ! would be our exclamation. What more than Arabian Nights entertainment blinds and dazzles our returning sight ? By what magic or art of necromancy are we deluded ? What grand vision of a scarce dreamed of, yet already realized, futurity bursts with millennial splendor upon our view ? Are we still in the fairy fable-land of dreams ? Impossible ! Where, then, are the pitiless wilderness and more pitiless savage ? Where the great unknown of the mighty continent, stretching out beyond the frowning portals of the hither shore—beyond even imagination’s most daring flight ? Where the wild

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New World of two hundred and fifty years ago? Gone! Every trace faded and lost, and gone. The frowning barriers of savageism have been swept away by the resistless march of a new, and brave, and free civilization. *American civilization!* *Ours!* Its onward course has been like that of the sweeping, all-compelling storm-wind, save that it has scattered naught but blessings. The far roar of its coming has been like that of desolating waters, save that it has made the generous earth to "smile and blossom as the rose." Like the deep echo of

"A great world in prayer,
Like God's own thunders in the air,"

furious, and unyielding, and triumphant as a conquering host, pressing down with sound of trumpets and waving of banners upon the vanquished, save that the dear ties, Hope, Justice and Liberty, have led the vanguard, dispensing joy, equality, and the greatest of God's blessings. Since its rise it has been the only true Star of

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Empire. The Old World has been comparatively idle. Those of her people who have lingered there have continued to feel the dread oppression of her systems, and have been standing still rather than advancing in the march of human progress, while those who have forsaken her and fled for refuge to our shores, catching the swift impulse of a true and generous liberty, have beheld the dawn of a fuller, fresher, happier life.

Words are idle. No language of mine can awaken the true American—who has studied his country's history, who is familiar with her trials and triumphs, who comprehends her greatness and possible destiny—to greater love and devotion. Her course has been upward like a star, climbing the azure deeps towards highest heaven. Mists have gathered, and storm clouds black with wrath have spent their angry fury, but behold her ever emerging into upper, purer air! Like the Star, her place is firmly fixed in Time's wide firmament, and her course is heavenward!

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Our recent gigantic struggle with rebellion and its happy termination have taught not only ourselves, but the world, a lesson of the permanency of free institutions. Believers of high and low degree in the disruption of our free Empire, canters of the "dismembered Republic," and the "late Union," whether in high public place or in private life, have been rebuked and silenced by the mighty logic of events. The flaming thunders of loyal cannon and the deadly gleam of Freedom's bayonets, pressing foeward, though deluging the land with brave hearts' blood and darkening many a home with the wide o'ershadowing wings of Death, have borne our proud flag in triumph everywhere, restoring peace and union, blotting out forever our *only stain*, breaking down all barriers of caste, binding us together as one people, with one common hope, one aim, one destiny, and making our land forever, with God's greatest blessing, the true "Land of the free," the true "Home of the brave."

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May we not then say that this, the natal day of the Great Republic, is a glorious occasion? May we not without vanity call *that* people truly great which has achieved such triumphs?

With an area of 3,000,000 square miles, nearly equal to the whole of Europe; a population of 35,000,000, scattered over thirty-four States; a sea-coast frontier of more than 5,000 miles, indented with magnificent bays and harbors, sufficient for the shipping of the world; with lakes and rivers of great beauty and extent, all bearing upon their bosoms the teeming argosies of commerce; with mountain ranges marvelously grand in scenery and rich in mineral wealth; with hills and valleys and wide-spreading prairies yielding their agricultural bounties, towns and cities of rare beauty, crowded centres of enterprise, refinement and learning; with a people devoted to the pursuits of industry and peace, and a government founded and happily perpetuated upon the eternal principles of human equality, its chief corner stone the sublime assertion

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of life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to all its subjects ; its past unrivalled, its present power resistless, and its future glorious ; who shall say to the American of to-day he may not be loyally proud or yield to a generous enthusiasm when his country is his theme ?

Some artist of divine endowment shall yet be born, whose soul shall conceive and whose ready hand shall transfix upon the awaiting canvas a glorious allegory of our history. In the foreground there shall be bitter winter darkness, on a wild, unknown shore, with crouching savages and the dim outlines of wild beasts shadowed darkly forth among the rocks and beneath the frowning forests.

The conception shall be wild and forbidding, and the scene shall challenge the advance of the best bravery. Then he shall paint the Dawn, with its mists rising above and beyond, revealing a glimpse of a new, untried creation, with the Star of Empire for its morning star and wide reaches of coming light upon the horizon. Then, swift advancing

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Morning, with its grand revelation of a continent still in the arms of nature, with mountains, rivers and lakes scattered in wild beauty, smiling in the genial light, and awaiting, as a bride, the coming genius of civilized intelligence. Then Day, with all its glories and infinite possibilities, stretching away and away, its widest boundaries filled with golden evidences of art, learning, enterprise and refinement; Prosperity and Joy shedding their gentle influence upon the scene, Hope smiling welcome, Plenty ever ready to shower her blessings, Power, Triumph, and Fame attendant, while *Liberty*, radiant and pointing heavenward, shall be enthroned upon the central eminence, her shield and own loved eagle beside her, surrounded by her circling stars and haloed by the most radiant tricolor of heaven's transcendent bow.

Love of country is among the first natural instincts. As life advances it becomes the first love of every true heart. The mind fondly reverts to the scenes of home and to the dear ties of the past

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in every stage of life, in every clime, until death claims its victim. The poor slave, rudely torn from his home and transported across seas, pines for the waving palm, the soft airs of his native summer, and even in the triumph of his dreams, lives again in the loved light of lost days. Men everywhere set up in their hearts an altar sacred to the spot of their birth, endowing it with whatever affectionate remembrance is in their natures. Living, they turn ever homeward, and dying,

“Oft they pray,
The only wish for which their hearts have room,”
to be permitted to repose in familiar earth. But whenever or wherever the fiat shall come that life is ended, whether amid friends and scenes familiar, or on far, lone foreign shores, I know that I but echo the heartfelt aspiration of *all* my countrymen when I pray—

Grant me, Great Father, when this earthly sight
Is blinding to the things I knew,
When life is yielding, and the blessed light
Of Heaven’s in view,

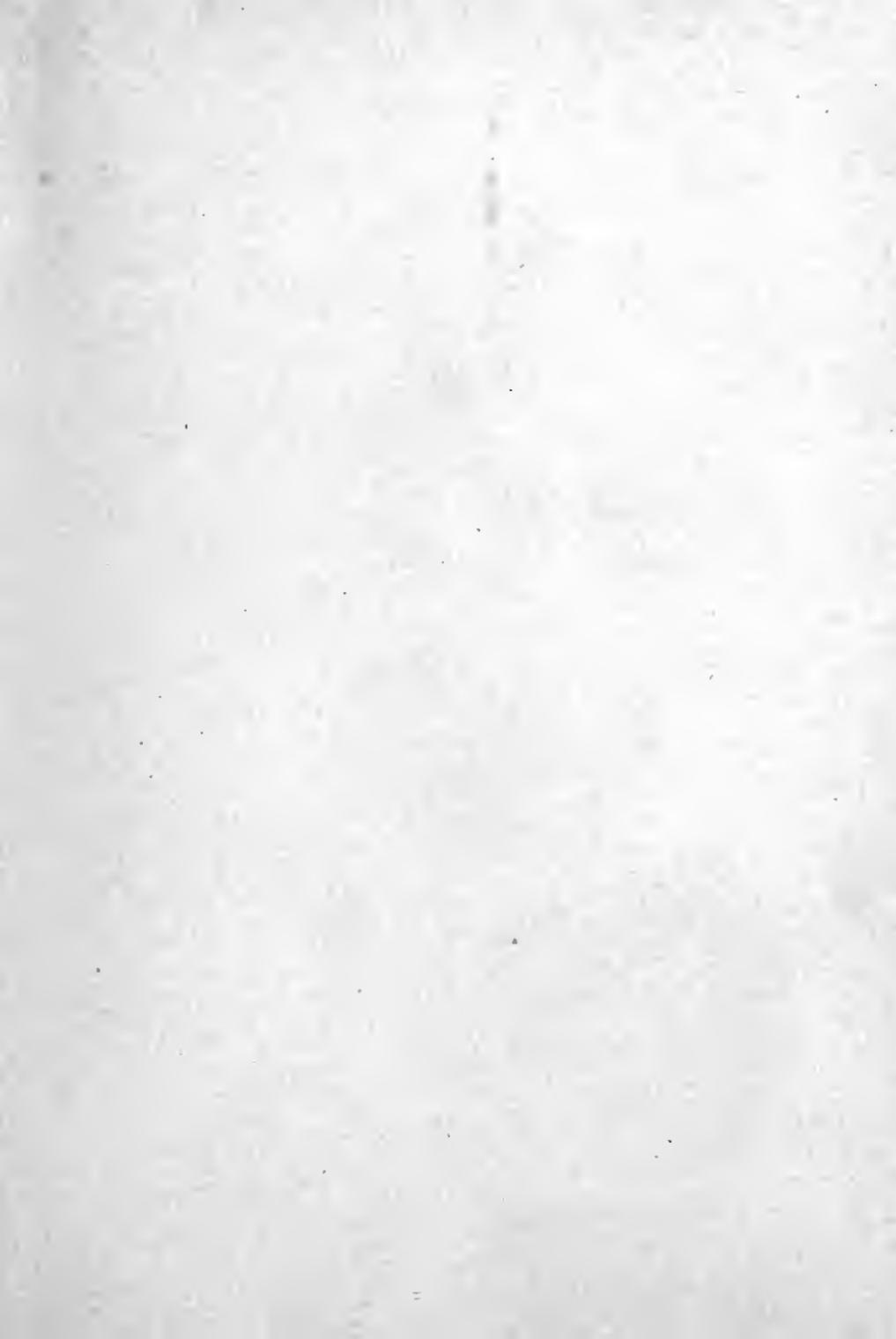
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MY COUNTRY shall stand foremost in the band
Of freedom's gallant true and tried,
And that my dying eyes behold our land,
By Thy power, glorified !

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